“Promoting Women Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA Region”

Project Launch and Roundtable on “Access to finance for women enterprise creation and development in the MENA region”

9 June 2015, 14:00 p.m.-18:00 p.m.
SEMIRAMIS INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL
Cairo, Egypt
I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT LAUNCH AND ROUNDTABLE

A. Background

The UNIDO’s project “Promoting women empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the MENA Region” objective is to create the conditions for a sustainable and inclusive growth by harnessing the great potential of women entrepreneurs in the MENA Region. To this end, UNIDO, under the umbrella of the Ministries of Industries of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, State of Palestine and Tunisia, provides technical assistance to women’s business associations and women entrepreneurs of the 6 countries of the MENA region.

The national women business associations partners in this project are: Association for Women’s Total Advancement and Development (AWTAD), Egypt; Business and Professional Women, (BPWA) Amman, Jordan; The Lebanese Association for Development - El Majmoua, Lebanon; Association des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises du Maroc (AFEM) Morocco; Business Women Forum (BWF) State of Palestine; Femme and Leadership – (F&L), Tunisia.

The project approach is holistic and will build on three levels, namely: (1) Nurture, facilitate and accompany policy dialogue between key stakeholders with the objective to produce a set of recommendations and action points endorsed by all parties to promote women entrepreneurship in the region; (2) Strengthen the capacities of national associations of businesswomen in providing better quality and demand-driven services to women entrepreneurs to create and grow their businesses; and (3) Directly promote about 200 promising women-led investments in the target countries through training, coaching, identification and facilitation of business partnership opportunities and access to finance.

B. Objectives

The launch of the project will offer an opportunity to present the project to a larger audience and promote the cooperation between national women’s associations, high-level decision and policy makers of the six target countries as well as relevant international and regional organizations. The project presentation will be followed by a round-table on access to finance for women entrepreneurs in the region, being this one of the major challenges MENA women encounter in creating or growing a business. The round-table will be an occasion for various stakeholders originating from the 6 target countries (public institutions, entrepreneurs, BDS providers, bankers and investors) to share experience, good practices and ideas on how to facilitate women entrepreneur’s access to finance.

II. AGENDA

The Roundtable will be divided into two sessions. Each session will have a Moderator who will introduce the topics and ensure orderly contributions of participants. Following the introduction, the floor will be opened to the speakers according to pre-established order as per agenda below. The interventions should not exceed five minutes. Open discussions will be held at the end of each session.
13:30 – 14:00  Registration of participants
Session 1  Promoting women empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the MENA Region
14:00 – 15:00
Moderator  Mrs Shereen Allam: President and Founder of AWTAD, Egypt
Speakers  Mrs Monica Carcó, Chief Investment and Technology Unit Business, Investment and Technology Service Branch, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
Dr. Hala El Shawarby, Representative of the Ministry of Industry Trade and Small and Medium Enterprises of Egypt
Italian cooperation
Mrs. Fatiha Hassouni, Project Manager at the Social & Civil Affairs division, Union For the Mediterranean (UfM)
- UfM’s support to women economic empowerment in the Mediterranean
Mrs Doa Wadi (BWF-Palestine) or Mrs Leila Miyara (AFEM Morocco) (to be confirmed)
- Presentation of UNIDO’s project: “Promoting women empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the MENA Region”
Discussion, questions and answers
15:00 – 15:15  Coffee Break
Session 2  Access to finance for women entrepreneurs in the MENA Region: Challenges and Opportunities
15:15 – 17:00
Moderator:  Mrs Monica Carcó
Speakers:  Ms. Hadil Kayyali, Deputy CEO / Head of Group Operations at Jordan Ahli Bank, President of Al Nashmeyat initiative.
- Presentation of the Jordan Ahli Bank’s “Al Nashmeyat” initiative aiming at improving access to finance to women SME owner’s
Ms. Raya Yusuf-Sbitany, Head of the Business Development Department at Bank of Palestine and leading the Women Markets Project at the bank.
- Presentation of Bank of Palestine’s Women Markets Project
Mrs. Alia Farhat, Business Development Manager, Al Majmoua - The Lebanese Association for Development.
- AL Majmoua collaboration experience with BLC Bank (Lebanon)
Mrs. Sana Ghenima, President of the Tunisian Association Femmes & Leadership - To be confirmed
- Facilitating access to capital through a women dedicated
investment fund

Mrs Neveen El Tahri - *To be confirmed*
- Venture capital

Shekra - *To be confirmed*
- Crowdfunding

Discussion, questions and answers

17:00 – 17:30 Closing
Mrs. Monica Carcó
Mrs. Shereen Allam

18:00 – 19:00 Cocktail Buffet – Hotel Semiramis Intercontinental

*NB: Please note that translation (English/Arabic/French) will be provided*